



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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Park Authority's New Fallproof Program Steadies Seniors

The Fairfax County Park Authority is introducing "FallProof," a fall risk reduction program to help decrease the leading cause of death for citizens ages 65 and older – falling down.

FallProof classes will begin in RECenters starting this April. The pilot program will be featured at Audrey Moore RECenter, Oak Marr RECenter, Spring Hill RECenter and Mt. Vernon RECenter. Other RECenters may be added later this year.

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control indicate falls cause more deaths than disease in elder Americans. Ninety-five percent of hip fractures are caused by falls, and 20 percent of victims die within a year after they fall. Twenty-five percent of community-dwelling older adults who have hip fractures are in a nursing home for at least one year.

"Adults over the age of 65 represent the fastest growing population in the United States including Fairfax County," said Monica Phillips, section manager for Fitness and Wellness. "Those numbers convinced us that the Park Authority needs to address the health of our senior population by offering the best fall prevention program we could find."

The FallProof program addresses several fundamental principles to help identify risks for falls and develop strategies to prevent falls. In addition to traditional strength training, FallProof includes working on posture, proper gait patterns, range of stability, and optimizing the functioning of the sensory systems of balance.

The program includes a comprehensive evaluation of balance and gate with pre-assessments, eight balance and mobility lessons designed around assessment results, homework, post-assessments and exercise recommendations for continuing balance practice and physical activity. Classes are limited to eight participants.

Planning for the implementation of FallProof started in February 2007 when the Park Authority identified a team of trainers to be certified in the program. The initial training included seven online training modules and a written competency test over a five-month period. The team completed a three-day certification exam in January.

For more information about FallProof, contact Monica Phillips at 703-324-8756 or e-mail her at Monica.Phillips@Fairfaxcounty.gov.

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